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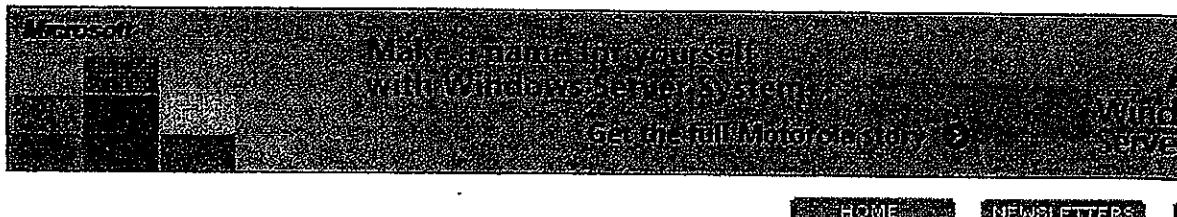
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Business News for Technology Leaders

Google Buys Digital Mapping Company
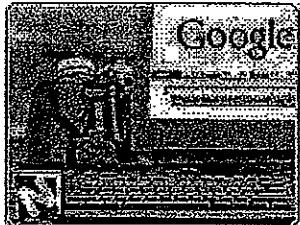
By Robin Arnfield
CIO Today
October 27, 2004 6:06PM

Google has purchased digital-mapping company K
supplies online satellite maps. Users of the service
street views and search for specific locations. Goo
the price of the service from $69.95 to $29.95 a yea
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Google ℗ has bought Keyhole, a U.S.-
based digital mapping company.

Keyhole provides online satellite
maps, which enable users to zoom
down to street level for specific
locations. Like Google, Keyhole is
based in Mountain View, California.

The terms of the acquisition were not
disclosed.

Massive Database

Keyhole's mapping system contains a
multi-terabyte database🗃 of mapping
data captured from satellites and
airplanes.

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"With Keyhole, you can fly like a superhero from your computer at home to a street corner somewhere else in the world -- or find a local hospital, map a road trip or measure the distance between two points," Jonathan Rosenberg, Google's vice president of product management, says in a statement.

Cut Price

Google has cut the price of Keyhole's mapping service to US$29.95 a year from $69.95, effective immediately.

"With an Internet connection, a user can enter an address or other location information and Keyhole's software hooks up to a database and takes the user to a digital image of tl a computer screen," the company says in a statement.

Keyhole's 3D interactive software gives users the option to zoom in from s street-level, tilt and rotate the view, or search for other information, such parks, ATMs or subways.

Competing with Yahoo

The acquisition of Keyhole is a sign of the increasing competition in the Internet search engine 🔎 space.

Rival search engine firms Yahoo 🔎 and MSN provide online mapping services on their Web sites, which enable users to zoom down to street-level scale.

"By having a mapping service, Google will be able to compete against Yahoo and the other portals that users go to for maps," Meta Group 🔎 analyst Tim Hickernell told NewsFactor.

Competitive Questions

"By lowering the price of the service, Google will make Keyhole attractive to mobile professionals, for example salespeople 🔎 who research a prospect company on Google, then need a digital map so they can make a sales visit. Instead of going to
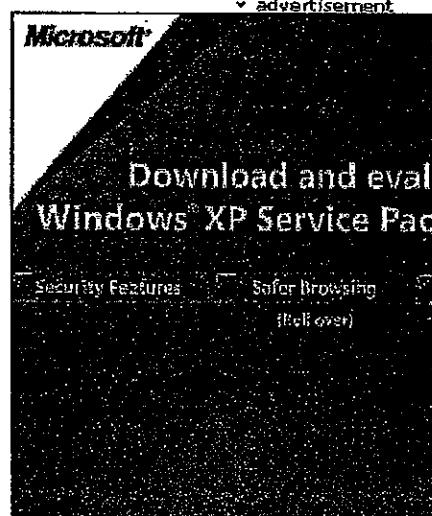
SKY00051

Yahoo for the map, they can stay with Google."

However, he cautions, "I think Google will need to 'dumb down' the user interface for Keyhole, as it is not as easy to use as the other portals' mapping services."

"Keyhole is a different type of product from the HTML-based mapping services," Keyhole chief executive officer John Hanke told NewsFactor. "We don't compete directly with the HTML-based services. Our users have to download a thick client," he explained.
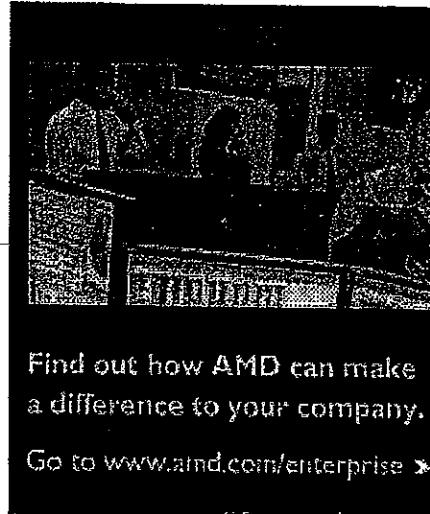
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Google Links

"With the existing form of Keyhole, there are already links to Google searc Hanke said. "If you are using Keyhole and you turn on the 'hotels' link, you specific hotels. You will then get their contact details along with a Google s

"What excited us about the deal with Google was the fact that the product developed could be made available to millions of users. Cutting the price w reach a wider audience."

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